

based on leadership potential. The American teens and their families are recruited, screened, and selected based on their willingness and ability to accommodate the addition of another teenager to their household for the one-month long project.

The Ulster Project is important because it teaches young people the skills of conflict resolution in an environment far from the politically charged atmosphere of Northern Ireland. The teens participate in an intensely programmed and professionally supervised month of educational, ecumenically spiritual and social activities that promote interaction and reflection. The teens are also required to perform weekly community service tasks and are allowed time to have fun with the new friends they make from both America and their homeland.

The Ulster Project provides the teens with an alternative to the "them against us" mind set that has permeated the politics of Northern Ireland for thirty years and that, until recently, had prevented reason from prevailing in the peace talks. The Ulster Project teaches a "them and us" approach of inclusion and discussion and resolution. Teens returning to Northern Ireland after participating in the Ulster Project have been able to view the conflict in a different light and change their perceptions of Catholics or Protestants. The Ulster Project has become a real and effective factor in turning young people away from continuing the conflict and towards working for peace.

There are many more Ulster Projects across the United States that have provided the same opportunities to teenagers from Northern Ireland. The American people have deliberately gotten involved in the effort to restore peace to all of Ireland and their efforts have paid off. President Clinton also recognized the importance of peace in Northern Ireland and devoted the resources of his administration to working to resolve the conflict in Northern Ireland and he has been credited with keeping the talks going which lead to the peace settlement.

The Milwaukee community is obviously excited to host the key players from the Northern Ireland peace talks. And, to finally see the prospect of peace manifested in the peace agreement is an accomplishment in which the Irish in Milwaukee, and around the nation, can surely take pride.

A TRIBUTE TO THE COLORADO EMS FOUNDATION

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 22, 1998

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the American fire service, a history steeped in tradition about individuals risking their own lives to save the lives of others. As Chairman of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus, I applaud the work of individuals and organizations, both past and present, who have preserved our communities and protected them against the threat of fire and other dangers.

Protecting communities against fire exacts a toll on fire departments, whether they are paid or volunteer. We, as private citizens, should

feel a sense of duty to help our first responders be properly trained and equipped to perform their work. For 350 years, they have responded to our calls without failure. As fire protection becomes a more expensive undertaking, the need for additional community support becomes more imperative.

This goes beyond public financing. The private sector can play a major role in augmenting local government efforts. Recently, I learned of an organization in the state of Colorado that awards grants and other types of aid to improve the readiness of first responders. Since its inception in 1996, the Colorado EMS Foundation has awarded hundreds of thousands of dollars to Colorado-based fire departments and EMS providers, allowing them to purchase state of the art equipment that will help save lives and reduce property damages caused by fires.

The Colorado EMS Foundation is primarily funded by one family, the Dixons. They are private citizens committed to a safer Colorado. The Executive Director of the Foundation, Robert W. Dixon, is a paramedic and former volunteer firefighter. His experiences exposed the Dixon family to the problems many fire departments face regarding inadequate equipment, instilling in them a desire to help our domestic defenders. When I hear of stories about private sector initiatives supporting first responders, I want them to be heard by others.

I commend the Dixon family for their efforts in Colorado. I hope that others across the country hear of their work and follow their lead. The American fire and EMS services need more people like the Dixons, individuals who realize the challenges facing emergency responders and who are willing to take it upon themselves to make a difference and come to their aid.

TRIBUTE TO LAUREL ELEMEN- TARY SCHOOL FIFTH GRADE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

HON. BOB SCHAFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 22, 1998

Mr. SCHAFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Laurel Elementary School fifth grade students and their teachers. Recently, I was invited to be a guest reader at the school's Read-Aloud Day, an all-volunteer effort to demonstrate to children the importance of reading. My time with the students was very rewarding and one of my favorite experiences as a Congressman.

Laurel Elementary School, whose motto is, "Learning Together for a Better Tomorrow," opened its current building in 1993, retaining the original school's name which was on Laurel Street. The staff is committed to and accepts the responsibility for providing a comprehensive academic experience which challenges all students. The staff and community work collaboratively to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment. They are determined that all students will learn essential skills to become successful, lifelong learners.

The ability to read is one of the most critical keys to a person's success and happiness, so I am pleased that Laurel Elementary School is fostering a love of reading. As the son of two

public school teachers and the father of four children, I greatly value quality public education. It is my goal for all children to obtain the background knowledge necessary to achieve mature literacy and succeed.

The Fort Collins Read-Aloud Day has been held for the last eight years and is organized to promote community awareness of the importance of reading. This year, more than 100 volunteers are giving their time to local schools. I am honored to have been invited to participate at Laurel Elementary School.

CONGRATULATING THE STATE OF ISRAEL ON ITS 50TH ANNIVER- SARY

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 22, 1998

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take this opportunity to congratulate the State of Israel and all of the people of Israel as they celebrate the 50th anniversary of their nation's independence.

The desire of the Jewish people to establish an independent modern State of Israel is the outgrowth of the existence of the historic Kingdom of Israel established three thousand years ago in the City of Jerusalem and in the land of Israel, and was finally realized with the assistance of the world community following the slaughter of six million European Jews during the Holocaust.

The people of Israel rightly take great pride in having rebuilt a nation, forged a new and dynamic society, and created a unique and vital economic, political, cultural, and intellectual life despite the heavy costs of six wars, terrorism, international ostracism, and economic boycotts. Furthermore, under these difficult circumstances, the people of Israel have established a vibrant and functioning pluralistic democratic political system including freedom of speech, a free press, free, fair and open elections, the rule of law, and other democratic principles and practices.

Because of our shared experience in building new nations and recognizing the fundamental liberties of our people, the United States and Israel have maintained a special relationship based on mutually shared democratic values, common strategic interests, and moral bonds of friendship and mutual respect. In addition, the American people have shared an affinity with the people of Israel and regard Israel as a trusted ally and an important strategic partner.

I extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to the State of Israel and her people for a peaceful, prosperous, and successful future.

FAUQUIER COUNTY HONORS SENIOR VOLUNTEERS

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 22, 1998

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, this Saturday, April 25, will be a special day in Fauquier County in the 10th District of Virginia. A very special